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February 16, 2017

The Honorable Mark Walker  
Representative, 6<sup>th</sup> District of North Carolina  
1305 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Walker,

Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) hold a special importance to the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC). Over the years, countless members of the CBC have attended HBCUs, many current members are alumni of HBCUs, and all of our members have fought strongly here in Congress in support of these institutions. So, on behalf of the forty-nine members of the CBC, I want to take a moment in advance of your upcoming meetings with HBCU presidents to thank you for your efforts to educate your colleagues on the importance of HBCUs to their communities and to this nation.

Encouraging more Members of Congress to understand and truly appreciate the value of HBCUs is a goal that all of us who care about HBCUs share. The more people who know how important HBCUs are as cornerstones of both our nation's higher education system and the communities they serve, the better. The more people who know that, despite historic and chronic underinvestment from state, federal, and private sources, HBCUs have provided access to a quality higher education for a diverse group of students for over 150 years, the better. The more people who understand the value of HBCUs and the challenges they face, the better our efforts to strengthen and support these schools will be.

In that spirit, I'd also like to provide some information with the hope that it will make your discussions with the presidents and future discussions about HBCUs more productive. This is a short history of the efforts that members of the CBC have made over the years and a few policy proposals that current members of the CBC have already generated to address some of the challenges facing HBCUs today. It is always important to study the past and understand the present if you are serious about making things better in the future. I hope the information that follows will aid you in your efforts.



Members of the CBC have fought for HBCUs because they know the value of these schools. The impact of HBCUs on our nation is undeniable and continues to this day. For example, ninety percent of African-Americans who earn bachelor's degrees in STEM subjects graduate from HBCUs. Half of all African-American teachers and forty percent of all black health professionals graduate from HBCUs as well. Beyond the degrees themselves, the education and experience that HBCUs provide benefits for students that last their whole lives. In fact, African-American graduates of HBCUs are significantly more likely to strongly agree that their school prepared them well for life outside of college than African-American graduates of non-HBCUs. And they are more than twice as likely to recall receiving the support they need while in school. These schools provide opportunities that other schools don't, create environments that other schools can't match, and do so while providing the highest-quality education for all of their students. And, in many rural communities, HBCUs are economic engines for entire regions.

CBC members have historically been some of the most aggressive champions for HBCUs. Adam Clayton Powell was the Chairman of the Education and Labor Committee when the original Higher Education Act of 1965 was passed. He was pivotal to the creation of the Title III program within HEA to help HBCUs and other developing institutions. CBC members Bill Clay, Major Owens, Charles Hayes, Mervyn Dymally, and CBC founding member and Education and Labor Committee Chairman Gus Hawkins were original cosponsors of the Higher Education Act Amendments of 1986. That reauthorization of HEA created a Part B program within Title III to specifically aid HBCUs.

More recently, CBC members have advocated for the creation of offices in various federal departments to support HBCUs, including the Minority Centers of Excellence in the Department of Health and Human Services, the Homeland Security Centers of Excellence in the Department of Homeland Security, the Minority University Research and Education Program in NASA, the HBCU Historic Preservation Program in the Department of the Interior, and many more programs in a wide range of other departments. In every Congress, and in consultation with every Presidential administration, the CBC has called for increased sustained support for HBCUs.

However, CBC members haven't been satisfied with just creating new offices and programs. They've also dedicated themselves to securing appropriations for them. Year after year our members have prioritized funding for HBCUs and the offices and programs that support them. Our members have worked tirelessly to make sure Congress backs up its promises of support with appropriated funds. This also includes prioritizing support for programs that we know HBCUs rely on including Pell Grants, Parent PLUS Loans, TRIO, GEAR-UP, and direct support for Howard University.

Attached is small list of some of the legislation and policy proposals that CBC members have developed to support HBCUs. I hope that you and your colleagues will support the policies reflected in the bills included in this letter and work with us as partners in the effort to support these schools.

In addition to working with us on those policies, I also ask you to request the new Administration move the White House Initiative on Historically Black Colleges and Universities out of the Education Department and into the White House.

Our education system is an ecosystem, and it takes support for all parts to improve the whole. That's why CBC members have worked so hard to support the schools themselves and the programs that the schools rely on. Additionally, whenever there have been policies that threatened the health of HBCUs or made it harder for them to serve their students, CBC members have been the first ones to stand up and fight them. It is our hope that your meeting with the presidents indicates that we can count on you to join us in those fights moving forward.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "C. L. Richmond", with a large, sweeping flourish extending from the end of the signature.

Cedric L. Richmond

Cc: Senator Tim Scott



Attachment: List of policies and bills to strengthen HBCUs.

- Increase affordability of education at HBCUs
  - H.R. 2962 America's College Promise Act of 2015 Sponsor: Rep Scott, Robert C. "Bobby" [D-VA-3] (introduced 7/8/2015)
  - H.R.4661 - Parent PLUS Loan Improvement Act of 2016 (114<sup>th</sup> Congress) Introduced by: Congresswoman Marcia L. Fudge
- Improve federal financial support of HBCUs
  - H.R.295 To reauthorize the Historically Black Colleges and Universities Historic Preservation program. Sponsor: Rep Clyburn, James E. [D-SC-6] (introduced 1/13/2015) **PASSED HOUSE**
- Support 1890 Land-Grant Institutions
  - Improve the required state funding
    - H.R.3828 Land-Grant Opportunity Act Sponsor: Rep Brown, Corrine [D-FL-5] (introduced 10/26/2015) \*Will be reintroduced by Rep. Richmond, Cedric L. [D-LA-2]\*
  - Provide dedicated federal funding
    - H.R.6020 Funding for Student Scholarships for the 1890s Land-Grant African-American Colleges and Universities Act Sponsor: Rep Scott, David [D-GA-13] (introduced 9/14/2016)
- Allow HBCUs to be eligible for competitive federal grant programs
  - H.R.4857 HBCU Innovation Fund Act Sponsor: Rep Adams, Alma S. [D-NC-12] (introduced 3/23/2016)
  - H.R.3872 Safe Streets and Representative Police Forces Act of 2015 Sponsor: Rep Kelly, Robin L. [D-IL-2] (introduced 11/2/2015)
- Improve ability of HBCUs to finance themselves
  - H.R.5530 HBCU Capital Financing Improvement Act Sponsor: Rep Adams, Alma S. [D-NC-12] (introduced 6/20/2016) **PASSED HOUSE**
  - H.R.6048 Latest Title: HBCU Investment Expansion Act Sponsor: Rep Ellison, Keith [D-MN-5] (introduced 9/15/2016)
- Create programs in Departments to work with HBCUs
  - H.R.53 Cyber Security Education and Federal Workforce Enhancement Act Sponsor: Rep Jackson Lee, Sheila [D-TX-18] (introduced 1/6/2015)
- Recognition of the importance of HBCUs
  - H.Res.357, Supporting the Goals and Ideals of National Historically Black Colleges and Universities Week Sponsor: Rep. Johnson, Eddie Bernice [D-TX-30] (introduced 9/25/2013)
- Increase resources for students at HBCUs
  - H.R.6164, the Inclusive Campuses Act Sponsor: Rep. Johnson, Henry C. "Hank" Jr. [D-GA-4] (introduced 9/26/2016)